

## Bicycle track along King Street will yield many benefits, including safety - Hawaii News - Honolulu Star-Advertiser

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In Hawaii, we have a tradition that people have the right to use the public spaces in our mountains and oceans, subject to rules for safety.

We have harbors for large ships and boats, zones for kayaks and swimmers. We passed a "Complete Streets" state law and Honolulu county ordinance to ensure the same is true for our streets -- that they support everyone's ability to move about safely.

The King Street cycle track, to be completed in December 2014, is a big step in making this important corridor safe for everyone. How?

Imagine Ikaika, an 8-year-old boy; Michele, a University of Hawaii student; Frank, a 45-year old driver; and Aiko, an 80-year-old woman. They live or work along King Street.

Ikaika, Michele, and Aiko would like to bicycle or walk to school or to the store. Frank commutes by car to work to and from downtown. Do they all deserve to be safe using King Street whether they walk, bicycle, take public transit or drive? How does the cycle track support their choice and their safety?

Cycle tracks:

- » Provide dedicated and protected space for bicyclists.
- » Are attractive to bicyclists at all levels and ages (from 8 to 80).
- » Leave the sidewalks for those who walk.
- » Concentrate most cyclists in a designated space, reducing crashes and injuries. A study of New York City cycle tracks found a 34 percent crash reduction for all users.

Bicyclists usually ride on the right side of a lane or street except when making a left turn. On a multilane one-way street cyclists are allowed to choose the left or right side. Cyclists also may use the full lane when the lane is too narrow for a car and bike to ride safely side-by-side in the same lane.

On King Street, the potential for interactions with TheBus and the cost of relocating bus pads made the left side more favorable.

Yes, drivers and cyclists have to be especially careful of left-turn conflicts. Alertness, courtesy and concern for others will go a long way toward keeping everyone safe.

Go slow, be patient, be safe, be happy.

Prior to installing the cycle track, the city allowed parking for 24 hours on both sides of King Street for more than six months. This reduced the street by one lane during rush hour, the same as when the cycle track is put in operation. The city found minimal delay for drivers. Now one of six lanes on King Street will be a designated a safe place for bicyclists, and will create safer sidewalks for pedestrians.

Supporting "active transportation" allows people to get exercise and be healthy, save money, enjoy a slower pace in a more livable community, contribute to a better environment, and do their part against global warming. A recent study even found that those who walk and bike are happier. Walkers and cyclists are also good for the economy: The money they save on gasoline leaves them more to spend on food, housing and other things that benefit the local economy. Cities across the U.S. have seen these economic benefits when cycle tracks are installed and sales increase. Fifty-five American cities now have cycle tracks; 31 have them 2-way on one side, including Los Angeles, San Francisco and Portland.

The King Street cycle track is a new idea for Hawaii. Pedestrians, cyclists and drivers need to learn new ways so everyone is safe. Visit [www.hbl.org](http://www.hbl.org) or call 735-5756 to schedule a talk for your community or organization on the King Street cycle track and to find out about "how to bicycle the cycle track" classes.

At some point in our lives, we are too young or too old to drive. We will want our streets "complete" so all users may go from place to place safely using their mode of choice.



*Chad Taniguchi, left, is executive director of the Hawaii Bicycling League.*

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